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“I want to see Seijun’s films once more before I die” — The Suzuki Seijun Incident and Postmodern Spectatorship / 「清順の映画、もう一度見て死にたい」——鈴木清順問題とポスト・モダン観客性

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This article on Suzuki Seijun’s firing from Nikkatsu was the first major piece I published in Japanese. The journal *Image Forum* was doing a special feature on major incidents in Japanese film history and for some reason they invited me to write about one incident. The article is a selection from a much longer paper I wrote as a graduate student on the incident (which, for some reason, I have still not yet published, even though some have cited it in their work). It’s a very early work and I would do a lot more if I wrote it now, but there’s not much on the incident in English, so I thought I should provide what I actually published.

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“I want to see Seijun’s films once more before I die”
The Suzuki Seijun Incident and Postmodern Spectatorship

By Aaron Gerow

Those who have theorized the postmodern as politically liberatory have frequently done so through an alternative image of the reader or viewer. Indebted to post-1968 French theory, they have envisioned the freeing of the signifier from the tyranny or the signified not only as a means of liberating artistic production from the cultural equivalent of high capitalism—high modernism—but of unchaining the reader. Roland Barthes, after all, tied the death of the author to the birth or the reader. The text, no longer framed by authorial intention or even the latent structure described by structuralist criticism, was now open to linguistic play between a multiplicity of texts and contexts. The reader/viewer was no longer obligated by an imperative to apprehend the "theological" message of the text, but was able to join in the play that indefinitely deferred meaning through a mode of reading now equivalent to writing. As in deconstruction or British Cultural Studies, reading or watching itself became as potentially politically liberatory as textual production.

Textual analysis may then not be sufficient to evaluate the Japanese postmodern; the issue should also focus on the activities of the reader or viewer within a historically mediated cultural context. While the issue of the Japanese postmodern is fraught with complications—the primary of which concerns the nature of a Japanese modern—a consideration of specific case histories may offer us insight into the problems revolving around readership in contemporary Japan. To this end, I would like to take up an example of a politically involved form of viewership in the Japanese film world: Nikkatsu's firing of Suzuki Seijun in 1968 and the protest movement that subsequently arose. One can see in the movement itself and the discourses produced by it a debate over spectatorship that reveals much about the problem of viewing cinema in post-1960s Japan.

The Nikkatsu contract director Suzuki Seijun was fired by the company president Hori Kyūsaku on April 24, 1968. The incident might have remained a matter internal to the industry if Hori did not, at the same time, also decide to block future distribution of all of Seijun’s films, forcing the cancellation of a major retrospective of Seijun’s works planned by the Shine Kurabu Kenkyūkai (Ciné-club Research Society) to start on May 10. In an oft quoted outburst, Hori explained to the ciné-club head, Kawakita Kazuko, that

Suzuki Seijun is a director who makes incomprehensible films. Therefore his films are not good films. Showing such films is an embarrassment to Nikkatsu. Nikkatsu cannot have the image that it is making films that only one group of people can understand.1

With Seijun himself taking Nikkatsu to court for breach of contract, reaction within the film community as a whole was swift and broad based. The Suzuki Seijun Mondai Kyōtō Kaigi

(Suzuki Seijun Incident Joint Struggle Committee) was soon formed to coordinate opposition, bridging both sides of the screen—viewers and filmmakers—in a movement that was best manifested in a series of demonstrations in front of Nikkatsu headquarters and in a set of panel discussions that related the issue to larger filmic and social concerns. Given that the protests concerned not only contractual legality or the right of a filmmaker to produce his own work, but also the right to see films now blocked from distribution, the Suzuki Seijun “problem” became a centerpiece for asking what it meant to watch movies in late 1960s Japan.

It is important to recognize that Hori’s statement was as much about the role of the cinematic audience as about the supposed unprofitability of Seijun’s films. Central to Hori’s reasoning was a concern for how spectators would read, first, the corporate image of Nikkatsu, and second, Seijun’s work. In both cases, what concerned Hori was the possibility of aberrant readings. Given the importance of corporate image to the Japanese studio system, it was not deemed commercially acceptable to sport an ambiguous image—one capable of being read in multiple ways—let alone a negative one. It was considered essential that interpretations of Nikkatsu’s image be positive and uniform.

While the issue of Seijun’s “incomprehensibility” clearly related to the definition of Nikkatsu’s image, threatening to sully that portrait, it is important to recognize how this discourse on knowledge was imbricated with the fear of alternative viewing strategies. At one level, as was later indicated in Nikkatsu’s court briefs, Hori was attempting to assert a universal standard of comprehensibility, constructing a homogeneous audience under the rubric of the “national masses” (kokumin taishū). Hori was a “servant” (hōshīsha) of “national entertainment” (kokumin goraku), who, following the logic of mass, modern consumer capitalism, needed a product consumable by the lowest common denominator to succeed.

One should see this massification of the film viewer, however, not as an assertion that the Japanese audience was genuinely a mass one which read films uniformly, but rather as a strategy involving corporate power over spectatorship. Hori was as aware as anyone else of the drastic changes in audience demographics in the 1960s, with the middle-class family largely deserting cinema and the cities for TV and the suburbs, leaving young urban males as a primary target base. This shift led studios to shift from traditional melodramas to the genres of most interest to the remaining audience: action and sex exploitation films (both of which became Nikkatsu’s staple in different periods). Hori, therefore, could not have been ignorant of the fact that the days of a homogenized, mass motion picture audience had long passed (if they had ever existed). In complaining that he did not wish to produce films only a certain group could appreciate, he could not have been afraid he would then be favoring that group over the “national masses” by producing specialized films—Nikkatsu was already doing that. Rather it appears Hori’s fear was that he would be supporting a particular kind of viewership—namely, the one represented by Seijun’s fans and the ciné-clubs. Not that he objected to this college age audience; they were a central part of the Nikkatsu audience. What constituted a real danger was that within this particular fandom, and within the ciné-club context, such an audience’s mode of spectatorship could not be controlled by the industry as a massified audience’s could. While Hori certainly had objections to Seijun’s films themselves, particularly Branded to Kill (Koroshi no rakui, 1967), what equally troubled Hori was precisely the way these audiences were watching films, as several observers were perspicacious enough to point out.

Satō Tadao, in paraphrasing Hori’s notorious declaration, located Seijun’s audience at the center of Hori’s reasoning. In Satō’s version of Hori’s mind-set, it was not the fact that Seijun’s films had attracted a select audience that bothered Hori, but rather that Seijun’s fame within a

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2 “Mondai” is often translated as “problem,” but I have opted for “incident” for clarity. On some occasions, I will use “problem” to emphasize how this was not just an incident, but also a problem for film culture at the time.

“high-class” (kōkyū) viewship had prompted Seijun to make incomprehensible films. The origin of the problem then lay in the audience, not in Seijun. Ueno Köshi’s analysis, written twenty years after the fact, is the most incisive. To Ueno, the ciné-clubs threatened the monopoly power of the studios by creating an alternative mode of distribution that by-passed the Big Five studios and established new and closer relations with filmmakers. Within the ciné-clubs, the audience “had pushed their independent choices (jishuteki sentaku) forward, undermining an industry that had, until then, held production, distribution, and exhibition all in one hand, showing films with programs only it had produced.” Ciné-clubs, especially by producing their own literature on film, wrested the power to speak about and interpret cinema from the industry, allowing for forms of autonomous spectatorship that undermined the ideal of a mass audience. To Ueno, it was only natural that Hori would use the Seijun incident to undermine the form of audience behavior represented by the ciné-clubs.

Both the ciné-club movement and the Suzuki Seijun Mondai Kyōtō Kaigi can be interpreted as marking a break with the modern culture industry. In Adorno and Horkheimer’s sense of the term, a modern culture industry, as an industry, standardizes production and regulates consumer demand (ensuring the reliability of sales) by producing a cultural commodity defined by formulas that have become ingrained in patterns of consumer desire. Modernity is then defined in part by the degree to which culture industries succeed in creating a truly mass audience. Postmodernity, then, to those who see it as politically liberatory, marks the demise of mass consumption and the freeing of consumer desire from industry manipulation. This, ideally, was what the ciné-clubs and the Kyōtō Kaigi aimed to do. By organizing spectator desires “to see the films they want to see,” they represented a break in the industry monopoly over cinematic knowledge. While a culture industry constitutes (political) authority over culture under the guise of the totalization of culture and the elimination of cultural political activity, the ciné-club movement represented an effort to reintroduce politics into the cultural sphere through forms of cinematic knowledge independent of industry control. If Hori’s action was then, in the words of the Kyōtō Kaigi’s first declaration, “a bald-faced insult and disregard against all audiences,” then the Kyōtō Kaigi itself would both defend the audience’s right to “freely view films that are freely made,” as well as create the kind of broad based coalition between viewers and filmmakers that could construct subjectivities capable of approaching cultural texts in ways other than how they had been pre-read by the industry.

Part of this project involved redefining private property through a new conception of viewship. If a culture industry is based on the defining the cultural artifact as the commodity form of private property, the Kyōtō Kaigi offered a different vision. One of the common criticisms of Nikkatsu’s ban on the distribution of Seijun’s films was that it took a collectively produced object that had become cultural property and re-appropriated it as private property. The Director’s Guild of Japan, for instance, declared that once a film was released for public viewing, it ceased to be exclusive property of the studio and became a “cultural property” (bunkateki shosan). Central to the argument was the fact the film was publicly viewed. For it was when the film was seen by the general audience that the audience appropriated it using their own independent modes of reading. If a film is not a film until it is seen, then spectators could

4 In Satō’s words, “Nikkatsu’s objection, to put it simply, was that because such films were praised by groups of high-class fans such as the Shine Kurabu Kenkyūkai, things went to Seijun’s head and he made films the masses could not understand.” Satō Tadao, Gendai Nihon eiga (Tokyo: Hyōronsha, 1969), 362.
6 Ibid.
7 The pronouncement is reproduced in Kawarabata Yasushi, “Kyōtō Kaigi de eiga kaikaku e—Suzuki Seijun jiken repōto 3,” Eiga hyōron 25.9 (1968), 65.
collectively appropriate private property because they created films through viewing and that was not the private property of the studios.

By connecting the Seijun episode to these larger problems of social control and power, the Kyōtō Kaigi attempted to define what was essentially a matter internal to the film industry as a social and political issue. In particular, opponents of Nikkatsu connected the Seijun “problem” to contemporary incidents involving the arbitrary use of state power. The year 1968 saw several occasions in which police interfered with independent film production, such as when they arrested an Ogawa Productions cameraman at Sanrizuka or confiscated the footage shot by the film circle at Kokugakuin University of demonstrations in Shinjuku. The general opinion voiced during the second panel discussion organized by the Kyōtō Kaigi was that, to quote one participant, “these events involving the confiscation of film are the manifestation of what was latent in the Suzuki Seijun incident.” The state exercise of power against political activity and expression was equated with corporate assertion of control over cultural activity; industry and government were linked in a complex critique connecting political authority with cultural power. Although police intervention in film production manifestly involved the issue of freedom of expression, the members of the Kyōtō Kaigi, by conjoining the suppression of political filmmaking with the inability to watch even the commercial films spectators desired, were, on the one hand, equating film spectatorship with a form of political production, as well as, on the other, interpreting independent film production as a model of, though not the exclusive form of, radical viewership involving the critical perception of social and political phenomena.

The postmodern form of spectatorship articulated by the Suzuki Seijun Mondai Kyōtō Kaigi was then defined both by the support of autonomous viewing strategies as well as by the politicization of those modes of interpretation. Implicit in this liberation of the spectator, however, was the fact that rejection of the modern culture industry could be considered politically progressive only in so far as these independent viewer subjectivities were supported by institutions such as the ciné-clubs or the Kyōtō Kaigi that were themselves connected to the larger social and political movements of the time. Aberrant readings proffered by atomistic individuals could not conceivably counter the power over interpretation wielded by a culture industry. It is this proviso, however, that helps us discern what was to be the inherent failing of the movement to support Suzuki Seijun: a contradiction in the conception of spectatorship that ultimately undermined the attempt to construct a politically liberated postmodern viewer.

The definition of criticism was central to this contradiction. When Seijun sued Nikkatsu for damages, also demanding an apology from Hori, part of Nikkatsu’s defense was to argue that Hori’s statement was a genuine criticism (hihyō) of Seijun's work. Opponents of Nikkatsu considered this absurd. As Kawarabata Yasushi wrote with sarcastic zeal: “So Hori’s statement, ‘Suzuki Seijun: incomprehensible,’ was in fact splendid criticism.” While such a position was necessary if opponents were to counter the reading of Seijun’s films Nikkatsu wished was uniform and under its control, it simultaneously undermined the movement’s effort to support “free viewing” by establishing an elitist hierarchy between what was truly film criticism and what was not, chaining the viewer to a standard of proper spectatorship. Such exclusionism, also manifest in the power structure within the Kyōtō Kaigi, disturbed observers at the time.

This conception of criticism was not unrelated to transformations in the film critical world at the time. Ueno Kōshi has convincingly shown how not only the Suzuki Seijun “problem”, but also Seijun’s oeuvre as a whole provided a stimulus for a major transformation in Japanese film

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12 See, for instance, the complaints expressed in “Suzuki Seijun Mondai Kyōtō Kaigi wa kore de ii no ka,” Eiga geijutsu 254 (1968).
criticism in the late 1960s. It was the “style that thoroughly trampled on meaning” in Seijun's films that prompted a revolt against the form of humanist criticism that reduced the abundance of film experience down to whether or not a film realistically depicted social problems. To tie Seijun's films down to a set interpretation destroyed not only the excitement of Seijun's purely filmic, but also its ultimately meaningless cinematic play, contradicted the movement towards free spectatorship represented by the ciné-clubs and the Kyōtō Kaigi. The new criticism, which eventually came to be represented by the writings of Hasumi Shigehiko (who participated in the Seijun demonstrations), would preserve the experience of cinema by speaking of films as films.

Such a shift mirrors in certain ways that experienced earlier in American and European film criticism with the arrival of auteurism and cine-structuralism, both efforts to reject social realist criticism in favor of a cinema specific mode of viewing. In addition, it also shares other basic premises with modes of postmodern criticism in its radical rejection of the logos of textual meaning and in its effort to free the spectator. However, it is important to note how this vision or criticism only exacerbated the contradictions inherent in the Kyōtō Kaigi. For by excusing criticism from the necessity to search for meaning it rendered apolitical the elitism inherent in the Kyōtō Kaigi. The problem was not with the conception or the text as without meaning; as Andreas Huyssen has argued, postmodernism can be politically liberatory if even essentially apolitical works like Pop Art can be re-appropriated and re-inscribed within a political movement. This, in a sense, was precisely what the Kyōtō Kaigi was attempting to do. The problem was that the new film criticism undermined that effort by insisting that criticism remain faithful to the cinematic quality of the text. The text was freed from the tyranny of meaning, but criticism was left indenatured to a new logos: no longer humanism, but the cinematic. While spectators were then free to the extent they were not required to read a text as a social realist document, they were prevented from liberating themselves from the transcendental truth of the cinematic and its representative, the auteur (e.g., Seijun). The imperative behind critical activity was to preserve the cinematic precisely by separating it off from all other forms of meaning, including the political. This dedication to the purity of the medium then holds more in common with the 1950s high modernism of Clement Greenberg than with postmodernism. The latent elitism of the Kyōtō Kaigi metamorphized into a cinematic solipsism best represented by a placard visible at one of the anti-Nikkatsu demonstrations: “I want to see Seijun’s films once more before I die.” Devoted to preserving the meaningless, yet inherently cinematic quality of the text, criticism and spectatorship itself ultimately descended into a form of auto-eroticism that valorized the hermetically sealed movie theater over the coalition building necessary to counter the power of a culture industry.

In valorizing the cinematicity of Seijun’s works, his supporters lost sight of what the Kyōtō Kaigi best represented: a notion of critique that understood the place of cinema in a larger historical conjuncture. While the discourse of the Kyōtō Kaigi articulated a complex analysis of the political role of cinema and spectatorship, its form of incisive viewing of social and cinematic phenomena was later drowned in a mode of intoxication with the cinematic image. It is important to note that post-1968 French and British film theory defined its postmodernity by rejecting the notion of cinematic specificity as logocentric as well as by tying the ideal of liberated viewing to the activity of politically radical critique. Without this oppositionality, post-Seijun incident Japanese film criticism, represented by Hasumi and his many imitators, fails to escape subservience to cinema and the cinematic text. Far from separating itself from the film and critiquing its place within the culture industry, criticism became an appendage to the text, and

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15 Quoted in Ueno, “Suzuki Seijun tatakau,” 222. A perhaps more accurate, though less smooth translation would be: “I want to see Seijun’s films once more and then die.”
therefore, often unwittingly, to a newer, more postmodern form of the culture industry defined by the effort to control consumer desire by dividing the audience into smaller, more manageable “taste groups.” The rejection of textual meaning became less a form of liberation (as it was in deconstruction) than a surrender to the simulacrum. If the kind of spectatorship born of the Suzuki Seijun Mondai Kyōtō Kaigi could be termed postmodern, we must ask whether it was less a political liberatory form of postmodernism, than the fundamentally reactionary and debilitating form described by Fredric Jameson as the cultural logic of late capitalism.
空洞化は進む一方。下請けで鍛えられた各国のアニメーターたちは力をつけた。韓国は技術と共にギャラも日本と差がなくなり、今やアメリカ相手に稼いでいる。四年の広島国際アニメフェスで見た韓国の長編は力作だが、明らかに日本のテレビアニメのあざとい演出や動きの模倣が目立った。独自の作風を早く作りあげたい。杢永の日本はバブルが消え、スポンサーが減り、テレピアニメも減り、今や沈滞状態。その一方で、《ユ、不スコ・アジア文化センター》がアジアの人々の識字率向上を目的とする教育アニメ『ミナの笑顔』を製作した。日本から鈴木伸てマレーシアから人気漫画家ラットが共同演出し、あたたかな気持のいい短編ができた。おもな作画スタッフは東映動画の下請けをしていたマレーシアのプロダクションである。

ユ、不スコはこの後、アジア各国の民話をそれぞれアニメ化する遠大な企画を立てている。日本のアニメの下請けプロがそうした企画に参加し、やがてその国独自のアニメ史が始まれば、日本の海外下請け開拓も何かのお役に立ったといえるだろう。

ホスト・モダンの代用品、劇映画の代用品。現在、週一回加分のテレピアニメ番組は却って日本。一番人気は『美少女戦士セーラームーン』だが『サザエさん』『コボちゃん』『クッキングパパ』『クレヨンしんちゃん』『ツヨシしっかりしなさい』の日常生活アニメの多さが目立つ。これらはアニメ独特の飛躍もフォルメもファンタジーもほとんどなく、昨今さっぱり見なくなったホームドラマの代用品ふうである。この〔普通の日常動作だけのアニメ〕は、高畑勲の『アルプスの少女ハイジ』から始まり『火垂るの墓』『おもひでぼろぼろ』、て完成した技術だが、現在はそれが長編アニメの主流になっている。最初に書いた氷室冴子原作のほろにが青春映画『海がきこえる』がそうであり、景山民夫原作の少年と水棲恐竜の物語『遠い海から来たCOO』(角川逮捕のあおりで公開が危ぶまれたのは事件の一つ)も、現在制作中のパンダイビジュアルの新作も、アニメらしい誇張や飛躍はなく、すぺて実写とSFXで可能な演出ばかり。まあ見飽きた顔の俳優たちよりは、アニメの人物の方がリ界トアイがある。手描きの背景なら理想のロケ地も光線も思うまま。俳優のスケジュールやロケ売で発生するトラブルなのは事件のリスクの心配ゼロ。かつ劇映画よりっと低予算。日本のアニメは結局〔劇映画の代用品〕か。アニメ・ブームの頃はそれでスペースオペラという日本映画の不得手なジャンルを代行、という意義があったが、今や日常小市民映画さえアニメが代行する。当然、背後にはしなびかかった日本映画界と、疲れきった社会がある。

ホームドラマの代用品、劇映画の代用品。現在、週一回加分のテレピアニメ番組は却って日本。一番人気は『美少女戦士セーラームーン』だが『サザエさん』『コボちゃん』『クッキングパパ』『クレヨンしんちゃん』『ツヨシしっかりしなさい』の日常生活アニメの多さが目立つ。これらはアニメ独特の飛躍もフォルメもファンタジーもほとんどなく、昨今さっぱり見なくなったホームドラマの代用品ふうである。この〔普通の日常動作だけのアニメ〕は、高畑勲の『アルプスの少女ハイジ』から始まり『火垂るの墓』『おもひでぼろぼろ』、て完成した技術だが、現在はそれが長編アニメの主流になっている。最初に書いた氷室冴子原作のほろにが青春映画『海がきこえる』がそうであり、景山民夫原作の少年と水棲恐竜の物語『遠い海から来たCOO』(角川逮捕のあおりで公開が危ぶまれたのは事件の一つ)も、現在制作中のパンダイビジュアルの新作も、アニメらしい誇張や飛躍はなく、すぺて実写とSFXで可能な演出ばかり。まあ見飽きた顔の俳優たちよりは、アニメの人物の方がリ界トアイがある。手描きの背景なら理想のロケ地も光線も思うまま。俳優のスケジュールやロケ売で発生するトラブルなしのリスクの心配ゼロ。かつ劇映画よりっと低予算。日本のアニメは結局〔劇映画の代用品〕か。アニメ・ブームの頃はそれでスペースオペラという日本映画の不得手なジャンルを代行、という意義があったが、今や日常小市民映画さえアニメが代行する。当然、背後にはしなびかかった日本映画界と、疲れきった社会がある。

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「清順の映画、もう一度見にたい」

【注1】上野昂志「鈴木清順闘う」、「鈴木清順全発言」（立風書房、1986年）に引用されている。

【注2】河原畑寧「長い長い斗い」、「鈴木清順レポート」、「映画評論」（1969年2月号）に引用されている。
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たのだ。むしろ堀が恐れていたのは、ある特定の観客性、なにしろ清順のファン・クラブやシネ・クラブに代表されるような観客性、それが支持することだったようだ。それは大学生くらいの年齢層の観客に反感を抱いていたということではなく、当時彼らは日活の映画を観る観客の中心をなしていたのだ。堀の抱いた恐れの本質は、これらの特定のファン、あるいはシネ・クラブというコンテクストのなかでは、大衆化された観客のときには不可逆的な変化が生じるという点にある。そこでは、清順の映画が選ばれた観客を集め、それが堀を悩ませたのではない。むしろ逆に、「高級」な観客層での清順の名声が、清順を難解な映画を作ることに駆り立てたのだ。つまり、問題の根は観客側にあることになる。

佐藤忠男は、堀の論理の中心に清順の映画を観にくる客を据えることで、彼の悪名高い宣言をより実に言い換え、佐藤がいう堀の思想によれば、清順の映画が選ばれた観客を集め、それが堀を悩ませたのではない。むしろ逆に、「高級」な観客層での清順の名声が、清順を難解な映画を作ることに駆り立てたのだ。つまり、問題の根は観客側にあることになる。

上野によれば、シネ・クラブは、映画の作り手との新しい関係を築き上げることで、観客をより緊密に結びつけることが可能であった。シネ・クラブは、映画の作り手との新しい関係を築き上げることで、観客をより緊密に結びつけることが可能であった。

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上野によれば、シネ・クラブは、映画の作り手との新しい関係を築き上げることで、観客をより緊密に結びつけることが可能であった。
共闘会議は清順問題をこの社会的、政治的背景からみた問題として、果てしない問題として捉えることを試みた。とりわけ、日活の敵対者たちは、共闘会議のメンバーは、政治的映画製作への同様の制限を視点に、政治活動を映画の内部の問題として捉え、また映画製作への政治的制限を映画を観ることを政治的映画製作の対象として捉えることを、自由な観客の立場から進めようとした。親日的な映画製作を批判し、政治的動向を批評し、また映画製作を政治的映画製作の対象とする。

「清順の映画、もう一度見て見たい」

清順の映画は、映画産業内部の問題を超えて、政治的内容を含む社会的・政治的な問題として定義づけられた。特に日活の敵対者たちは、映画の政治的映画製作への同様の制限を視点に、政治活動を映画の内部の問題として捉え、また映画製作への政治的制限を映画を観ることを政治的映画製作の対象として捉えることを、自由な観客の立場から進めようとした。親日的な映画製作を批判し、政治的動向を批評し、また映画製作を政治的映画製作の対象とする。
レアス・ホイセンが論じたように、ポップ・アートのように本質的に非政治的作品を政治的方向に再使用、再銘記されてしまうとしても、ポスト・モダニズムとは政治的に何ものにも捉えられなければならぬ自由なものとして定義することが可能なのだ。これは、新しい映画批評が、批評とはテクストの映画的な質に忠実であるべきだと固執したことにある。テクストは意味の専制から解放されたが、批評は新しいロゴス、それまでの人間主義ではなく映画の本質という新しいロゴスと契約を結んだまま残されたのだ。確かに観る者はテクストを社会現実主義的な描写として読む必要がなくなったという意味で自由になったが、映画の本質という超越的な真実とその象徴、である作家（この事件の場合は鈴木清順）という観念的な事実から自由になることを依然と阻まれていた。こうした批評活動の背後には、強権的な指向性によって、政治を含むあらゆる意味の形態から映画の本質のみが切り離されて温存されることになったのだ。このようなメディアの純粋性の献身は、ポスト・モダニズムの時代ではなかったクレメン・グリュンバールが唱えた一九五〇年代の高度モダニズムの時代ならば効力をもつだろう。共闘会議に潜在するエリート主義は、反日活動のデモでかかげられていたプラカードの「清順の映画、もう一度見て死に担げ」というスローガンに象徴されるような、映画至上主義的な孤立主義へと変質していった。無意味さ、さらにはテクスト固有の映画的本質を擁護することに専心するあまり、批評行為と観客性が連帯関係を一に上げていくことよりも、映画館を他のものから絶縁した状態に保つことにやっきになるという閉塞した自慰行為に陥ることになったのだ。清順作品の映画性の擁護に専念する課題で、彼の支持者たちは共闘会議に最良の形で象徴されていたはずの、より大きな歴史的関連性のなかで映画の位置を理解するという批判的視点を見失ったのだ。確かに共闘会議の言説は映画とそれを観ることの政治的役割の複雑さを明確に分析したが、そのような社会的映画に対する観察は映画がイメージを構成するという形態なのか、あるいは映画の意味の役割を受けていないのか、です。こうした観点の違いが、映画の位置を批判することに専念することもあり、批評行為として観客性を連帯関係を一にする必要がある。清順問題以降の日本の映画批評は、映画というテクストへの依存を免れていない。映画そのものから自らを切り離して文化産業内部での映画の位置を批判することのできない批評は、テクストの付属物と化し、新しい、よりポスト・モダニズム化された文化産業の形態の従者になってしまう。テクストの意味の否定が、デコンストラクションがそうであったように解放の形態ではなく、シュミレーターへの降伏となっている。もしも鈴木清順問題共闘会議によって生まれたような観客性の形態をポスト・モダニズムと呼ぶことができるというなら、それはポスト・モダニズム独自の政治的に自由な形態というよりは、フレデリック・ジェイムソンが資本主義末期の文化論理として論じた根本的に反動的で衰弱した形態といったほうがふさわしいのではないか、と聞かえてみる必要がある。